

WEEKLY - SITUATION REPORT - 19-23 August 1968

As the opening of the Democratic National Convention at Chicago, Illinois on 26 August 1968 draws near, interest and apprehension continue to mount because of the vast number of unpredictable attendant thereto, both in the Convention's proceedings and in the proposed and/or possible activities which are not directly a part of the Convention.

The threat of serious disruptive activity and the real possibility of violence has been recognized by law enforcement groups and by certain dissident elements as well. Several leaders have advised their followers to abandon plans to attend unless they are willing to assume the obvious risks. It is not known at this time, if these warnings will substantially reduce the number of demonstrators in attendance.

Although there are a number of groups and individuals who will be on the scene, whose intention or potential for disruptive action exists in varying degrees, the three largest groupings and probably the most difficult to deal with will be:

The National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NMCEWVN) - which has assumed the leadership role in coordinating the activities of some 100-150 peace groups, as well as unaffiliated individuals, at the Democratic National Convention. While autonomous groups will be making their own decisions relative to their participation, the National Mobilization Committee is providing direction and plans for mass actions.

The Youth International Party has assumed leadership and direction of a potentially large number of hippies, yippies, and assorted off-beat individuals, whose purpose is essentially to "have experiences", antagonize authority and express complete dissatisfaction with the "establishment". Control by leaders will be loose at best and may be nearly nonexistent.

The third and perhaps the most dangerous grouping is the amalgam of black nationalist militant organizations, local colored youth street gangs, and assorted racially oriented organizations. There is no one primary source of leadership among these groups and the individuals in many cases will be acting more or less spontaneously.

5-13688

One unusual aspect relative to the Democratic National Convention will be meetings held in Chicago during and after the Convention, by the National Committee of Inquiry, a broadly based all-Negro group formed during the past spring to evaluate statements by political candidates and then make recommendations to the black community. Representative John Conyers, Jr., of Detroit is the committee's temporary chairman. Members include civil rights activists from moderate and militant groups; Democratic and Republican politicians; educators, entertainers, doctors, lawyers, black nationalists and persons on public assistance. Bill Hall, a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), is the committee's executive secretary. Area chairmen include:

Yvonne Braithwaite, Assembly-woman from Los Angeles.

Alderman A. A. Rayner of Chicago.

Dr. Albert Wheeler, professor at the University of Michigan Medical School and Michigan state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Dr. John Holloman, a past president of the National Medical Association.

Benjamin Brown, of Atlanta, a member of the Georgia Legislature.

Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Julian Bond, Georgia State Representative.

Mayor Richard G. Hatcher of Gary, Indiana.

Floyd B. McKissick, director of the Congress of Racial Equality.

Lerone Bennett, senior editor of Ebony Magazine.

Harry Belafonte, the entertainer.

Mrs. Coretta King, widow of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

William Smith, a Democratic party official from Minnesota.

The "invasion" of Czechoslovakia by Russia and her satellites has not only taken over much page one space from the Democratic National Convention but may have considerable affect on the ultimate platform planks adopted. Also, according to a Scripps-Howard Staff writer, it has resulted in the CPUSA having to desperately seek some means of preventing its own destruction in the wave of revulsion evoked by the "Soviet rape of Czechoslovakia."

Already riddled by factionalism and weakened by its estrangement from the younger and more vigorous New Left, CPUSA is ridden by the fear that Moscow's brutal suppression of the liberal Czechoslovakian regime will finish

[REDACTED]

the wrecking job that started in 1956 when Russian troops put down the Hungarian revolution.

Yesterday Gus Hall, the party's general secretary who maintains himself in office almost solely by virtue of his durable ties with Moscow, issued a gingerly (sic) statement on Czechoslovakia that was a masterpiece of straddling the issue.

The statement was a clear attempt to find some rationale for supporting Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia without further alienating the party's dwindling support among the young activists of the New Left and the Negro militants. Experts familiar with the tormented history of CPUSA do not think it will succeed.

The senile decay of CPUSA was well advanced even before the shock of the Czechoslovakian invasion sent it into its present convulsions. In the loose confederation of the New Left there were already half a dozen political organisms which experts regarded as more "pure" in their Marxist-Leninist doctrine than CPUSA itself. These include the Progressive Labor Party, Trotskyite groups and certain Negro militant groups.

"Far from being the disaster for the New Left that many people thought it would be," said one expert, "this is going to prove a tremendous windfall for them. This will finish the destruction of CPUSA and leave all the elements of the far left no place to go but to flock under the umbrella of the New Left.

"This is actually in microcosm what is happening all over the communist world - the falling away of this generation from the Moscow-dominated orthodoxy. It started with Tito, then came the Hungarian revolution, the splitting off of Red China, and now the Czechoslovakian episode. Within a year there is certain to emerge a new communist international, and this one will not be centered in Moscow. It will probably be dominated by Luigi Longo, the Italian communist leader."

On 22 August 1968, the State Department arranged for foreign ambassadors to attend the Democratic National Convention. Diplomats will stay at the Edgewater Beach Hotel and will be transported by chartered aircraft.

SOURCES: Government sources and news media.

RELIABILITY: Unevaluated